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Thursday, January 16 - Wednesday, January 22, 2014

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CONCERN OVER HOUSING PLANS

Residents question proposals for 70 homes in Worting



**Captain Ketch
returns!**

See page 3

A BASINGSTOKE community has expressed concerns over plans to build 70 homes on farmland in the area.

Wates Developments have submitted plans to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) to erect the houses at Worting Farm, Worting, 28 of which will be affordable units.

However, residents have claimed such a development will be damaging to the surrounding area.

Councillor Tony Jones, BDBC's Labour ward member for Buckskin, said: "Overall I think this planning application would be detrimental to the local area and I would strongly recommend officers to refuse the application."

Cllr Jones believes the development "flies in the face" of Worting Village being protected from overdevelopment.

He also said the historical significance of the site would suffer, the area being known for nearby crop marks and bronze age ring-ditches.

Local campaigner Nigel Pierce echoes the sentiments of Cllr Jones, and emphasised the desire of some residents to maintain the "green area" of Worting.

"This green space should be maintained as a conservation area and its integrity should be maintained as part of the overall plan for this area, as a significant green space," he said.

By James Booker

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Both Cllr Jones and Mr Pierce are also fearful of nearby junction remodelling causing severe bottlenecks in the area, and are concerned about "inconsistencies" in the differences between affordable housing and those deemed to be privately owned.

A Wates Developments spokesperson said: "On the basis of a clearly identified need for new housing in the area, Wates Developments has submitted an application for 70 homes."

"We fully respect the importance of the local environment and heritage and have put forward a sympathetic scheme design that enhances the environment."

BDBC's Planning and Development Manager, Mike Townsend, said: "Planning officers are looking at all factors, including the principle of development in this location, the impact on any surrounding development of historical significance and whether the level of development is appropriate along with other existing policies while considering the application."

"It would not be appropriate to comment on an application before all this work has been completed and a decision has been made."

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Basingstoke Observer (Head Office)
Newspaper House, 4A Hawksworth,
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Commercial Director

Jeremy Moreton
Telephone: 01235 511700
jeremy@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Accounts

Telephone: 01235 516911
accounts@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Advertising - (Head Office)

Telephone: 01235 511700
enquiries@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Distribution & Subscriptions

Telephone: 01235 516902
distribution@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Newsdesk

Managing Editor: Howard Taylor
Acting News Editor: James Booker
Telephone: 01235 516930
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Production

Telephone: 01235 516934
studio@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

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Hard calls ahead - transport chief

HAMPSHIRE County Council's economy, transport and environmental chief has warned of tough decisions ahead regarding the region's highways.

Councillor Sean Woodward wants to make sure the authority takes into account the residents' priorities when making any decisions.

"We're listening to what Hampshire residents want and expect, and it's important we use our £113million budget fairly and respect the public's priorities," he said.

"In particular, around our highways services that affect everyone in Hampshire one way or another.

"This does mean some tough decisions will need to be made.

"Our priorities are to look after our highway network, to ensure that subsidised bus and community transport services support travel to areas of employment, education and health, and to both reduce the cost of processing household waste and reduce the volume of waste that goes through the system.

"We'll be looking at some different and innovative ways to make sure we can continue to deliver these key priorities, while meeting our budget savings targets and maintaining the quality of our core services.

By James Booker

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

"The aim is to focus resources where they are most needed and provide highways, transport, economic development, planning and waste services for all of Hampshire's council taxpayers on an equitable, efficient and effective basis."

HCC are considering reviewing school crossing resources, as well as phasing out start-up funding for additional police speed limit enforcement.

Proposals are also being considered to consult on the current enhancements to the concessionary fare scheme for pensioners, which currently accounts for around 20 per cent of the total highways and transport revenue budget.

Concessionary fares, together with subsidies to fund lesser-used bus routes, cost the council over £50,000 a day, and as resources are squeezed through reductions in government funding, these areas will be reviewed to find their share of savings.

Hampshire County Council's Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee will review a series of budget proposals on Tuesday.

Remembering Holocaust victims

BASINGSTOKE will pay its respects to Holocaust victims later this month as part of the UK-wide day to remember those killed in the World War Two genocide.

The Mayor, Councillor Dan Putty and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) chief executive Tony Curtis will lay a wreath at the town's War Memorial on January 27.

A bugler will mark the observance of two minutes silence and any members of the public who wish to do so may attend.

Holocaust Memorial Day has been commemorated worldwide since 2000 and is marked on the anniversary in 1945 of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi



• Basingstoke's Mayor, Cllr Dan Putty

death camp.

Cllr Putty said: "On Holocaust Memorial Day we can pause for a while and remember the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the Holocaust and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

"On this poignant anniversary we honour the survivors and remember the lessons of their experiences."

Do you have a story to share with our readers?

Contact the Newsdesk on 01235 516930

or email news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Bus service overhaul

STAGECOACH is set to introduce new bus services in Basingstoke, with the network being completely overhauled and many routes replaced.

It is hoped that the changes, from February 16 will see improvements on many services, such as providing faster routes through the town, better frequency of buses and

improved train connections.

The majority of routes will run every eight to 15 minutes during the daytime, while rural routes to Alton, Basingstoke, Bramley and beyond will not be affected.

Andrew Dyer, managing director for Stagecoach

South, said: "It goes without saying that a small number of customers will be disadvantaged.

"All our customers are important and we've tried hard to make sure the minimum number of people will be inconvenienced."



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News Bites

Fleet road death

POLICE are appealing for information after a man died in a collision in Fleet on Tuesday.

The man was pronounced dead at the scene after his Vauxhall Astra collided with a Renault flatbed van on Blackbushes Road at around 3pm. No-one else was injured in the crash.

Both drivers were travelling towards Elvetham Heath when the collision occurred.

Anyone with any information should contact 101 quoting Operation Keyboard.

Offenders, think!

A NEW initiative is being launched in areas of Hampshire designed to reduce re-offending, by making criminals think.

Offenders of criminal damage, public order, anti-social behavior, assault or theft, attending a three-hour education and awareness course similar to those offered to motorists for speeding offences.

Hampshire's PCC Simon Hayes said: "This course provides a diversionary alternative to make offenders think about their actions and steer them away from committing further offences.

"I stated in my Police and Crime Plan that I wanted to explore new initiatives to improve outcomes for victims and offenders. This scheme meets those criteria."

Javed Khan, chief executive of Victim Support, said: "The Victim Awareness Course has been designed to make perpetrators really think about the impact of their actions on others, and help to reduce reoffending.

"Victims of crime tell us that although they want to see offenders punished, what they want more than anything is for their offender not to commit another crime."

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Captain Ketch nears the end of his quest



• Adventurer James Ketchell has been all over the world in his expeditions

BASINGSTOKE adventurer James Ketchell is set to finish his challenge to cycle around the world next month, as he bids to complete the 'World's Ultimate Triathlon'.

James, 31, is due at the finish line in Greenwich, London, on February 1, seven months after setting off from the same location at the end of June.

By Adam Flinn

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

The challenge comes after previous successful efforts to firstly row across the Atlantic Ocean in 2010, and climb Mount Everest in 2011.

He has been undertaking

challenges following a motorbike accident when he was younger, which doctors said he would have little chance of doing any continual physical tasks.

"That just made me want it more!" James said. "I could sit and feel sorry for myself, or I could do something about it."

James has been cycling an

average of 100 miles per day plus as he makes his way around the globe, for a total unsupported trip of 18,000 miles.

The challenge will have taken him through more than 20 different countries, and crossed from the northern hemisphere into the southern hemisphere for the Australasia section.



Flood danger still active in some places

AN ALERT remains active for groundwater flooding in the Basingstoke and Sherborne St John areas, with more rain forecast in the coming days.

However an alert on the Upper River Loddon was lifted on Tuesday, covering Basingstoke, Old Basing, Sherfield-on-Loddon, Chineham and Meadow Park.

The Environment Agency are advising communities to remain aware of the potential for further flooding, stating it will be several days before river levels are back to normal.

Howard Davidson, Environment Agency director for the South East, said: "We are seeing a risk of groundwater flooding in places such as Hampshire."

"Environment Agency teams continue to work around the clock monitoring river levels, clearing watercourses, and working with communities to make them aware of their flood risk."

"We want to stress to residents that the risk of further flooding has not passed and they should remain vigilant."

News Bites

Talk to reveal secrets of the Solent

INVESTIGATIONS carried out by the Maritime Archaeology Trust on the Solent are the subject of a talk, taking place at the Basingstoke Discovery Centre on February 2.

The talk will be given by the

Trust's Garry Momber, where he will speak about the history of the Solent over the past 8,000 years.

Tickets cost £3, and starts at 11.30am. For more details, go to www.hants.gov.uk/bsdc.

Don't 'waste' chance to sign up for service

GREEN fingered borough residents can sign up for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Garden Waste Service for 2014.

Residents will be given a week-day collection day, dependant on which area of the borough they live, along with two sacks to collect all their grass, trimmings, leaves, twigs, prunings and weeds when they sign up.

The service will continue to be charged by the number of

collections left when residents join, meaning that any residents who sign up once the service has already started will only be charged for how many collections they will receive.

Everything collected in the large hard-wearing green garden waste bags is composted locally to produce bags of Pro-Grow, high quality organic soil conditioner to help gardens grow.

Last year, over 6,000 people in the borough joined the scheme, sending 1,505 tonnes of garden waste for composting.

The service starts on February 17.

Cabinet Member for the Envi-

ronment Cllr Robert Donnell said: "The garden waste collection service is a convenient and environmentally friendly way for residents to recycle their garden waste."

"The number of households signing up to the service increases every year, showing how popular the collections are. Signing up to the service saves residents trips to the household recycling centre with their garden waste or putting it in their grey bins which they shouldn't be."

For more information, visit www.basingstoke.gov.uk/go/greenwaste or call the council on 01256 844844.



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TV's Paddy drops in at slimming awards

Fancy climbing Kilimanjaro?

HAMPSHIRE and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance (HIOWAA) is appealing for would-be adventurers to take part in a challenge to climb Mount Kilimanjaro.

The Kilimanjaro Trek 2015 will raise vital funds for the air ambulance, where participants will take part in a six-day hike to the summit of Africa's highest mountain.

Matthew Davis, from Upton, is taking part in the trek to celebrate the life of his daughter Lily, who was taken to Southampton

General Hospital by HIOWAA in 2012.

Lily's mum Felicity said: "We are eternally grateful to the air ambulance for everything that they did for Lily."

"She would have been three-years-old on January 1, 2015, and we see the Kilimanjaro trek as a great way to celebrate her life and raise funds and awareness for HIOWAA."

The trek is being led by HIOWAA community fundraiser James King, who will be offering training tips and advice on raising money throughout 2014.

He said: "We have had an amazing response to our Kilimanjaro call to action and this will be an important fundraising opportunity for HIOWAA in 2015."

"We need more people to take up the challenge, and to make it their New Year's resolution to 'Reach New Heights and Help Save Lives'."

Anyone interested in taking part should contact James on 02380 333377 or email james@hiow@airambulance.org.uk.

The Kilimanjaro Trek 2015 will raise money for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance



SLIMMING World consultants from Basingstoke got the chance to meet with TV presenter and comedian Paddy McGuinness at the group's annual awards ceremony.

The Basingstoke team were delighted to meet with Paddy, who co-hosted the Slimming World Awards with the organisation's chair and founder Margaret Miles-Bramwell OBE.

Jane Bradley, a Slimming World consultant, said meeting Paddy was the cherry on the top of a great year for groups in Basingstoke.

"Obviously the most important thing of all is that our members have lost weight and improved their health throughout 2013 and we're so proud of all of the slimmers in the area," she added.

"Many of them have achieved their target weights and been able to do things they never thought possible before slimming down, including doing more with their families or simply fitting in smaller-sized clothes."

"By making small, easy changes to the way they shop, cook and eat and getting support to overcome the challenges they face along the way, they see a big difference on the scales and a big smile on their face!"

Paddy said: "I have to admit

By Adam Flinn

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

the most I knew about Slimming World before the awards was a gag in Peter Kay's routine that refers to Slimming World as being £1 cheaper than its competitors! Jokes aside, I was genuinely amazed to hear about what a difference Slimming World makes.

"At the ceremony I met lots of people who'd lost incredible

amounts of weight and it had totally changed their lives.

"Every single one of them told me that they couldn't have done it without the support of their Slimming World group and their consultant."

"Before I started working in comedy I was a fitness instructor, so I know how important it is to look after yourself."

"Having the help and support of someone to keep you on track and be there with advice when you need it really is invaluable."



Burglaries spark cops warning

RESIDENTS in Basingstoke are being urged to review home security following several burglaries in Brighton Hill and Grove.

Between 6.30am and 6.45pm on Monday, January 6, there were three burglaries and one attempted burglary.

An failed attempt was made to gain access to a house on Lehar Road between midday and 2.30pm.

Money was stolen from an address on Elgar Close between midday and 6.30pm.

Between 6.30am and 6.30pm, offenders broke into a house on Porter Road and stole money and jewellery.

A watch and perfume were stolen from a house on Cranbourne Lane between 7.30am and 6.45pm.

Sergeant Heike Brueck from Basingstoke police station said: "We believe that these four incidents may be connected and are keen to hear from anyone who saw anything suspicious in the area at the time that these incidents occurred."

"I would also urge residents to follow our crime prevention tips to ensure homes and out-buildings are as secure as they can be and keep an eye on your neighbour's properties."

"If you spot anything suspicious in the area report it to the police."

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact Sgt Brueck at Basingstoke police station by calling 101.



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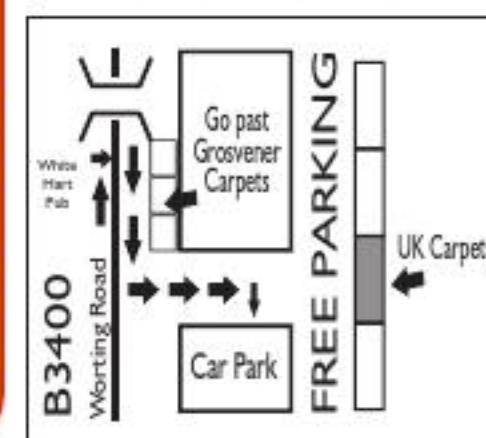
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Everybody
needs good
neighbours!

HAMPSHIRE County Council is calling for nominations from Basingstoke and across the county for its annual Good Neighbour Awards.

The awards were set up in 2005 to celebrate the contribution of both young and older people, and recognise Hampshire residents who volunteer and give their neighbours a bit of help.

This can range from working with young people with disabilities and special needs, organising coffee mornings or helping less able neighbours with chores.

By Adam Flinn

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

They were introduced nine years ago by chairman of the council Ken Thornber, who will also host this year's awards ceremony in the Great Hall, Winchester, on March 20.

He said: "All too often good deeds can go unnoticed, which is why it is important that we pay tribute to the efforts of Hampshire's volunteers."

"There are thousands of people across the county who are good neighbours providing vital support within their local community."

"Anyone who receives help from a neighbour and would like to say

thank you should nominate them for a Good Neighbour Award.

"These individuals probably don't think twice about what a wonderful job they are doing for someone else, but they deserve our thanks."

The awards are run by the council in partnership with Age Concern Hampshire, Brendoncare Club Hampshire, Carers Together, the Good Neighbours Support Service, the Royal Voluntary Service, The Children's Alliance and Community Development Facilitators.

Nominations can be made by downloading a form from www.hants.gov.uk/goodneighbour-awards, or by emailing civic.events@hants.gov.uk.

All forms must be completed by Monday, and people and groups can only be nominated once.

Christmas appeal proves just the ticket!

A BUS company's Christmas appeal raised more than £1,000 for St Michael's Hospice, thanks to the generosity of passengers who travelled on the specially decorated Santa Bus.

In two weeks leading up to Christmas, Santa was behind the wheel of a Stagecoach bus, which served all areas across Basingstoke, raising money for the hospice.

Rob Vince, Operations Manager for the Basingstoke area, said that the Santa Bus was a big hit with families.

He added: "I'm really proud of our local Santa bus driver, Dave Flower, for going above and beyond, and really getting into the Christmas spirit all in the name of charity. He has helped raise a fantastic amount for St Michael's Hospice."

The total collected by Santa and helpers for the Hospice amounted to £1,108 - £300 more than 2012.

"This year's Santa Bus was great fun and a huge success," added Lynne Grimshaw, St Michael's Hospice Community Campaigns Coordinator.

"The people of Basingstoke were so generous and helped to raise a fantastic amount of money for St. Michael's Hospice."

"I would like to say a personal thank you to everyone who supported the Santa Bus. I would also like to say thank you to Stagecoach and to Santa himself who helped make this year's event so successful."



• Santa, aka Dave Flower, and helpers from St Michael's Hospice entertain Stagecoach passengers before Christmas

HCC's culture and recreation conundrum

THE county council is pondering measures to maximise the effectiveness of culture and recreation services, as it faces up to more cuts from central government.

Funding has been slashed by 43 per cent in the last four years, and HCC needs to cut spending by 12 per cent ahead of next year.

The council's Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs Select Committee will review a series of

budget proposals on 20 January, before the executive member for Culture and Recreation considers recommendations to the council's cabinet in February.

One proposal is the five-year transformation of Hampshire's Country Parks to be financially self sufficient, thereby safeguarding them for future generations.

Councillor Keith Chapman, executive member for Culture and Recreation at HCC, said:

"These proposals present a range of ways in which we can help Hampshire's cultural and recreation services remain viable in the long term."

"Over the past three years, government grant to the Council has been cut by over 40 per cent, and we are looking at further reductions beyond this year."

"It is, therefore, vital that we continue to explore ways in which we can continue many of these services."

Austen ring finally goes on display



The Jane Austen House Museum in Chawton will soon display the recently reacquired ring (both pictures courtesy of the Jane Austen House Museum)

A RING once owned by Jane Austen will go on display at her Hampshire home for the first time on Valentine's Day.

The turquoise and gold specimen was acquired by the Jane Austen House Museum in Chawton after a mammoth fundraising effort.

US singer Kelly Clarkson had bought the ring at auction in 2012, after it had been in the Austen family for 200 years, but it was subject to a temporary export ban.

And the museum successfully raised the £150,000 asking price to keep the ring in the area.

It is one of only three pieces of jewellery known to have been owned by Jane in her lifetime.

The ring contains her December birthstone, turquoise, and is said to symbolise "wisdom and spiritual journeys".

Community facility levy for developers

A NEW levy could be introduced to charge private home developers towards community facilities and infrastructure.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) is planning to charge developers up to £160 per square metre towards various community projects for every new private home built in the borough.

Currently, the council gets money from developers for facilities specifically related to individual development schemes, for example to provide play areas.

The new community infrastructure levy would be used to raise funding to go into a 'pot' that could be used for bigger schemes.

The proposed charging schedule would mean developers of the larger sites in the draft Local Plan in and around Basingstoke would need to pay £105 per square metre of floor area built. All other sites in around Basingstoke or Tadley would be required to pay £75 per square metre built and across the rest of the borough developers would need to pay £160 per square metre built.

The council would also charge for commercial development between £60 and £240 per square metre of floor area.

By James Booker

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Cabinet member for Planning, Cllr Mark Ruffell, said: "We have considered carefully how high to set the charges for developers building new homes. "It is vitally important that the developers building new homes contribute to infrastructure improvements.

"We have also decided on the required number of affordable homes that developers will be required to build on each site.

"We have taken expert advice to ensure that we don't set the charges or the affordable homes figure so high that developments become unviable meaning that the homes that the borough needs won't actually be built.

"Our priority remains to have infrastructure improvements being provided at the time that new homes are being built and to provide homes for the borough's residents who might otherwise not be able to afford them.

"We are keen to hear what people think of our proposals."

This first stage of consultations are open until February 17. More information can be found on BDBC's website.

It is expected the levy will be introduced in April 2015.

White van men - stay alert and secure!

A SPATE of tool thefts in Basingstoke and North Hampshire have prompted police to remind van drivers to keep their vehicles secure.

Ten incidents have been recorded in Basingstoke, Winchester, Farnborough, Aldershot and Yateley in the last week, in which vans have been targeted

and power tools stolen. Call 101 if you see any suspicious activity. Alternatively, get in touch with Crimestoppers.

Police advice to the region's van drivers

- Park your vehicle in a secure area (in a garage or behind locked gates, if possible).
- If you do not have a secure parking place, park in a well-lit street in easy view of your own or neighbours' houses.
- When visiting businesses, try to park close to the entrance and preferably in the view of CCTV.
- Ensure all windows and doors are properly secured when left unattended.
- Where possible, remove valuable items from the vehicle overnight and store them in a secure place.
- Do not leave tools or

equipment on view inside the vehicle.

- Consider fitting an appropriate alarm system, protecting the cabin and load areas.
- Apply a security marking product to power tools and equipment (further details of the various methods are available on request).
- Alternatively, etch or emboss identifiable marks to these items.
- Consider installing secure storage containers or lockers in the van to store the tools in.



- Ensure that the van doors are securely lockable and consider having suitable deadlocks installed.
- Make sure to physically check that the van doors and windows are locked if you have used the remote to lock the vehicle, even if the feedback indicates the van has locked.
- Log your property for free at www.immobillise.com.

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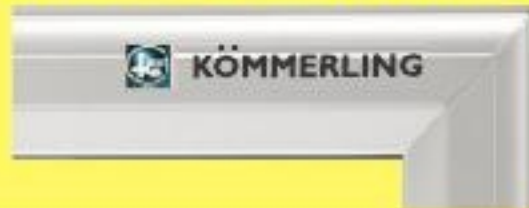
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PCC warns about effects of cop cuts

HAMPSHIRE'S Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has lamented the "very, very difficult" times for policing after proposing an increase in the policing element of council tax.

Simon Hayes plans to raise the policing precept by 3 per cent, after the force's funding from central government was slashed as part of the recent cuts.

This will mean asking the average Band D household in Basingstoke and around Hampshire will pay an additional £4.54 a year, or 9 pence a week, raising the total bill to £155.79 per year.

Additional cuts to those announced in 2010 mean that the constabulary will receive £41million less in the coming financial year compared to four years ago.

Further cuts in the region of £25million are expected for 2015-17, to which the constabulary is responding with an extensive re-organisation programme.

"These are very, very difficult times for policing in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight," said Mr Hayes.

"It would be wrong of me not to tell the public the truth about the impact of government cuts.

"Our police service has been praised by Government as a well performing and well run service, yet Ministers are again cutting the money for policing in our communities.

By James Booker

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

"This time by £25m, which equates to approximately 555 police officers.

"It is getting more difficult to keep up the level of neighbourhood policing people want and, quite frankly, should expect."

Mr Hayes added that continued cuts would reduce policing to "dangerous" levels, and would "risk handing to upper hand to criminals".

Residents are being asked to give their opinion on the propos-

als on an online survey, available at www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk.

It can also be accessed via Mr Hayes' Twitter account and Facebook page.

Consultations will close on Wednesday, with Mr Hayes debating the proposal next Friday (January 24).

"I believe that we must maintain a safe level of neighbourhood policing, including PCSOs on our streets, and this is why I am left with no option but to propose a precept increase," added Mr Hayes.

"But I want to hear the public's view on this.

"Our short online survey is an



Hampshire PCC Simon Hayes

easy and simple way to let me know whether you agree with this proposal or not."

Dunn deal! Stewart takes the reins as new chamber chief

HAMPSHIRE Chamber of Commerce has elected a new CEO after its previous chief retired.

Stewart Dunn will take up the role next month, after current CEO Jimmy Chestnutt announced his retirement following nine years in the role.

Mr Dunn is currently Managing Director of Carswell Gould,

an award-winning integrated marketing communications agency.

Mr Dunn said: "I am really looking forward to taking up my appointment as CEO at this very exciting time for the organisation as Government recognises, through the Heseltine report, that the Chamber

is the first choice for helping to deliver business growth for the region."

Mr Chestnutt added: "Stewart will bring a wealth of business and media experience to the Chamber which will be invaluable in supporting the Chamber's initiatives for business growth in the months ahead."

Have your say on borough's climate change strategies...

PEOPLE of Basingstoke are being urged by the borough council to voice their opinions on the authority's climate change strategy.

BDBC's update draft pledges to reduce carbon emissions year-by-year and 'lead by example', and to further encourage residents to think more about cutting their individual carbon footprint.

The consultation runs until January 27.

Cabinet member for the Environment and Climate Change, Cllr Robert Donnell, said: "Addressing climate change is a key priority for the council.

"We have committed to reducing carbon emissions, working with local partners and with all sectors of the community to raise awareness and encourage change to meet national targets.

"It is important that as a borough council we lead on this matter locally and the updated Climate Change Strategy will enable us to do that, setting out clear objectives and methods to achieve our targets."

For more information call 01256 845750, email climate-change@basingstoke.gov.uk or visit the council website: www.basingstoke.gov.uk/go/climate-changestrategy.



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'Stoke residents asked to doodle and donate

BASINGSTOKE and Hampshire are being asked to doodle their support in raising funds to combat epilepsy.

National Doodle Day, on March 7, will try to get as many people doodling as possible, in order to raise money for Epilepsy Action.

Famous faces already signed up for the drive include Sir Michael Parkinson, Alan Titchmarsh, Bill Nighy and Jackie Collins.

Around 13,000 people are currently living with the condition in Hampshire.

Philippa Cartwright, fundraising events manager at Epilepsy Action, said: "Doodlers across the UK have helped us to raise over £275,000 since the very first National Doodle Day over ten years ago.

"Each day, 17 children and young people are told that they have epilepsy, changing their lives forever.

"By taking part in National Doodle Day, members of the public can ensure that the next child to be diagnosed doesn't have to face living with epilepsy alone.

"Spending just a few minutes of your day to get creative really

By James Booker

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

will make all the difference to people affected by epilepsy and their families.

"Absolutely anyone can take part so please round up your classmates, teachers, family and friends and get doodling!"

The charity is urging people to 'do a doodle, donate a pound' and enter their competition.

Schools that enter the competition will have the chance to win £250 of equipment and resource vouchers, with individuals and groups available to win the same amount in cash.

The winner of each category will also receive a custom-made 3D stuffed figure of their doodle design.

All winners will get a certificate and will have their work displayed in the doodle Hall of Fame on the National Doodle Day website.

The day is being supported by Dodo Pad, publishers of the original family 'doodle diary'.

Groups can register for an organiser's guide and enter the competition by visiting www.nationaldoodleday.org.uk or calling 0113 210 8800.

Closing date for entries is April 4.

MP hails £400k injection for area's businesses



BASINGSTOKE MP Maria Miller has welcomed the £400,000 worth of National Lottery grants the area's businesses received during 2013.

Last year, the National Lottery granted £398,573 in supporting 10 projects in Basingstoke, including schools, sports groups, arts groups and charities.

"I am delighted that some really good causes in Basingstoke have benefited from Lottery funding during the last year," said the secretary of state for Culture, Media and Sport.

"It is great to hear about the way in which some of our local organisations and communities have been helped.

"The National Lottery does so much to support these vital local organisations and I would encourage more of them, both large and small, to apply for grants to help fund their projects."

In the last 20 years, lottery funding has supported over 420,000 projects across the country.

• Maria Miller, MP for Basingstoke and secretary of state for Culture, Media and Sport

News Bites

In the money?

ST MICHAEL'S Hospice has announced the winners of its lottery draw from January 10.

Oakley ticket 21563 claimed the top prize of £1,000, while 39053 of Basingstoke was awarded the £100 runner-up prize.

Third prize (£50) was given to Tadley ticket 30255, and fourth prize of £20 was claimed by 26990 of Basingstoke.

Sixteen prizes of £5 were given to tickets 04087, 17431, 29633, 37119, 51243, 52618, 55593, 56327, 60979, 62580, 70239, 70653, 71447, 75065, 82842 and 87288.

Get fit and firing

BASINGSTOKE Sports Centre will play host to the county's Steady and Strong exercise classes from Wednesday.

Hampshire County Council has organised the weekly events for older people in an attempt to improve their strength, balance, confidence and co-ordination.

Classes are also taking place in Farnborough, Wickham and Hedge End.

HCC's executive member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Councillor Liz Fairhurst, said: "With an increasing ageing population it is essential we offer advice, support and services that help older residents remain independent, enhance their quality of life and reduce, or delay the need to use long term social care. By preventing falls, older people's chances of staying independent at home are significantly increased and they can continue to live an active lifestyle."

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Cole, Brendan Cole...

A great Concept

BASINGSTOKE'S very own boyband Concept are performing their second hometown concert on Saturday evening, after an impressive two years.

The boys started performing together while they were at Queen Mary's College, and have supported acts such as Example, Chase and Status and Diversity in the last couple of years. Tickets cost £13.50 for a 7.30pm start. To book, call the box office on 01256 844244 or go to www.anvilarts.org.uk.

Jackie Oates

FOLK musician Jackie Oates plays a mix of English ballads and songs in her performance at The Railway, Winchester, taking place tomorrow.

As well as her solo career, Jackie also plays with folk super-group The Imagined Village, and has performed extensively at festivals and venues across the country.

Tickets cost £14 on the door, and doors open at 7.30pm.



• Brendan Cole comes to Basingstoke on Saturday evening

STRICTLY Come Dancing star Brendan Cole brings his new show 'License To Thrill' to The Anvil on Saturday, following on from his debut theatre tour last year.

Brendan and his cast of 14 musicians and six internationally-known dancers enact a wide range of different dances during the two-hour show.

Waltzes and Foxtrots are performed alongside fast-paced Quicksteps, Tangos and American Smooths, as well as Latin dances that promise to keep audiences entertained throughout the evening.

"My dance cast is truly international, with a collective CV from competition, theatre, stage and television," said Brendan.

"I'm very lucky to have a cast that have been in Dancing With The Stars around the world as well as stars from the Broadway hit Burn the Floor and, of course, Strictly Come Dancing."

Brendan is joined by Strictly co-star Aliona Vilani for Saturday's performance, after original leading lady Fauve Hautot was forced to pull out because of injury.

By Adam Flinn

adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Aliona said: "With this wealth of talent we will ensure audiences have the best seat in the house all night, and I can't wait to see the show back out in theatres again."

The band is led by musical director Barry Robinson, and it features vocalists Ian Mackenzie and Julie Maguire, as well as a number of other British musicians.

On stage throughout the show the band will be performing songs spanning several decades, from Nat King Cole to Gladys Knight to Michael Bublé.

"There is a small nod to James Bond with the music," Barry said about the music in the show.

"One of the big songs is Gladys Knight's 'License to Kill', hence the 'License to Thrill' title, and there is a dance-off between the males in 'Live and Let Die'.

The show starts at 7.30pm. For further details, go to www.anvilarts.org.uk or phone 01256 844244.

Snow Queen at Bordon Phoenix

PANTOMIME starts at the Bordon Phoenix this evening, which this year is based on the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale The Snow Queen.

A range of characters are featured in the performance, from the ultimate baddie in the Snow Queen to two good fairies, as well as a couple of ageing hippies who appear in the show.

It runs until January 25, and tickets cost £9. Go to www.phoenixarts.co.uk or call 01420 472664 for more details including show times.

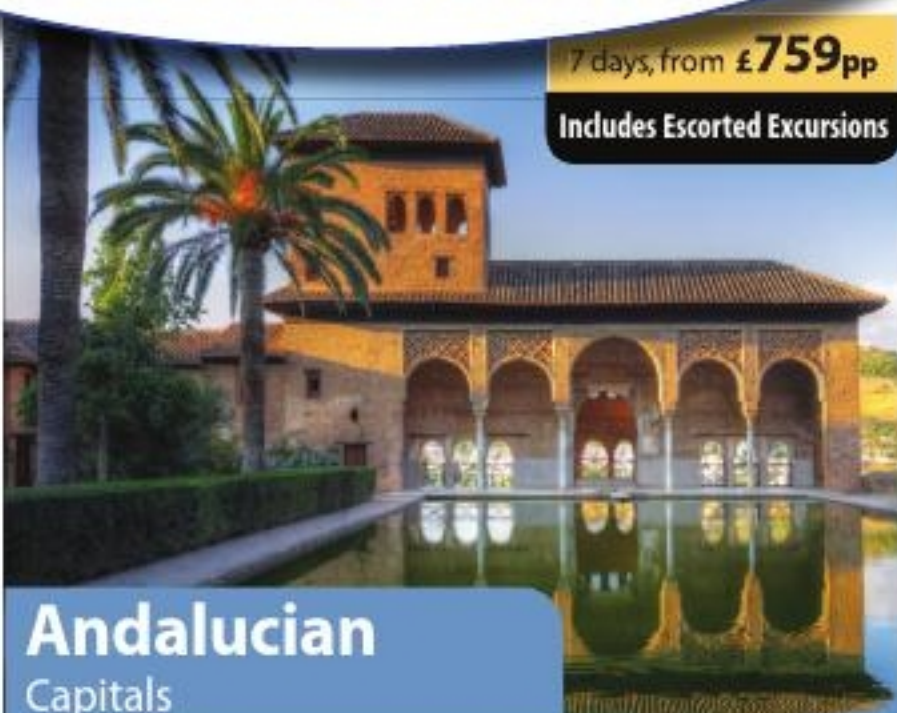
Open mic night

CENTRAL Studio is host to an acoustic open mic night tomorrow evening, for Basingstoke's talented musicians to impress in front of a live audience.

Everyone from professionals to first time performers are welcome on stage, as are those who simply want to listen to up and coming stars perform a diverse range of material.

It is free to enter, and begins at 7.30pm. Anyone who wishes to take part should email paul.phillips@qmc.ac.uk, or go to www.centralstudio.co.uk for more information.

Basingstoke Observer



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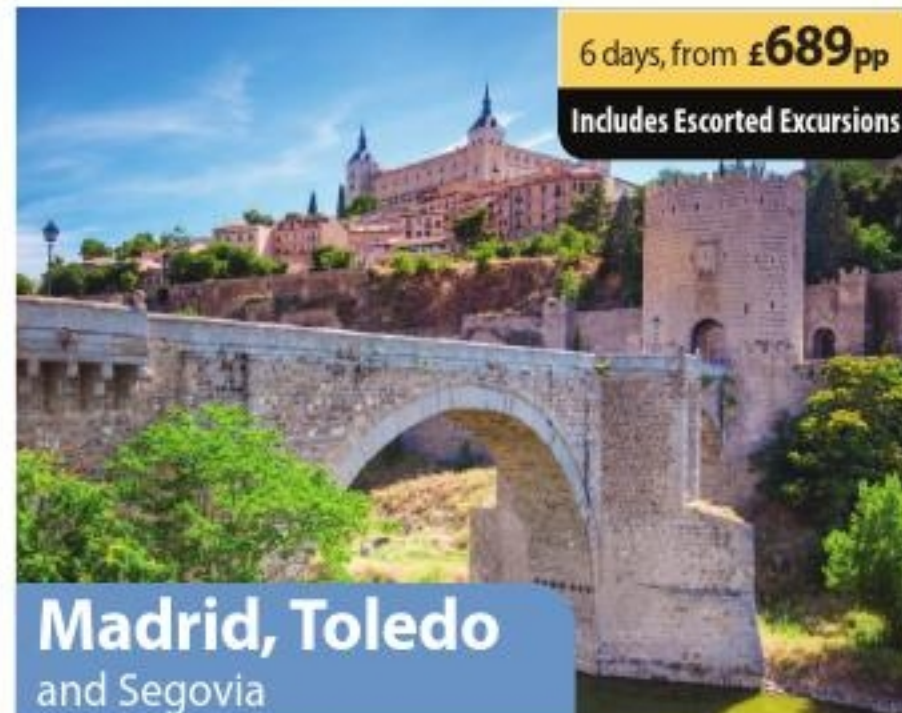
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Sian's flying solo now

Let's go nuts!

ROSHI Featuring Pars Radio play songs from their latest album tonight, as they come to The Railway, Winchester, for their latest performance.

Their album 'Three Almonds and a Walnut' is listed for two categories in the 2014 Songlines Music Awards, and is led by Welsh-born singer Roshi Nasehi.

Doors open at 8pm, and tickets cost £5. Go to www.railwaylive.co.uk, or calling 01962 867795.

Johann Strauss

THE Johann Strauss Gala are in Basingstoke tomorrow night, with an evening of entertainment through music and dance hosted by showman and conductor Rainer Hersch.

Dancers perform to the Blue Danube Waltz, Radetzky March, Emperor Waltz and Lucifer Polka among others, featuring the singing of soprano Kristy Swift.

Tickets start from £22 for a 7.45pm start. For more details, go to www.anvilarts.org.uk or phone 01256 844244.



• Sian Storey painted two rhino sculptures for Marwell Zoo last year

• Sian's most recent painting, entitled 'Paris Nights'



A BASINGSTOKE-BASED artist is hosting her first solo exhibition at the Proteus Creation Space, open to the public from Monday.

Sian Storey, who works as an art teacher in Tadley, will be showcasing her work in 'Adorned', which will be running until February 1.

Her work is influenced by artists including Matisse, Dumas and Beardsley, as Sian explores colour, texture and patterns in her paintings.

By Adam Flinn

adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

"It's very exciting," said Sian. "It's been influenced by things like Geishas, modern icons, goddesses, femme fatales, and it can be described as quite beautiful with feminine symbols like birds and butterflies."

"I had a successful year last year in terms of art projects, where I painted two of the rhino

sculptures for Marwell.

"I also won a competition where I worked with Daniel Radcliffe, and did some artwork to promote his new film at the end of last year."

"On the back of that, it's given me the inspiration to get out there, especially locally in terms of exhibitions."

Sian has been a part of numerous art exhibitions in the past, but this is the first time she has presented a display comprised entirely of her own work.

As well as looking forward to the experience herself, Sian also spoke about the support she has had from friends and family.

"They're excited, and proud that it's such a big solo event," she added. "Whereas in the past I've always been part of something, or working on a project for somebody else."

The exhibition is free to visit, and is open from 10am to 5pm on weekdays and on Saturdays until 1pm. Go to www.proteustheatre.com or phone 01256 321621.

School's out!

SHERFIELD School are hosting their first annual open submission exhibition from tomorrow, with work from 22 different artists set to be on display.

The exhibition runs until February 26, and tomorrow's opening night will feature live music from Sahara, and a judging panel will choose an artist to have a solo exhibition at the school later in the year.

For more details, call the school on 01256 884800 or email l.hampson@gss.gemsedu.co.uk.

Live and Unsigned

THE best of Hampshire's musical talent are performing at Central Studio on Saturday evening, showcasing some of the most exciting new performers in the area.

Live and Unsigned offers a true gig experience for new bands and artists, which on Saturday is headlined by local group Whitewash.

The show starts at 7pm, and tickets cost £5. To book, call the box office on 01256 418318 or go to www.centralstudio.co.uk.

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14 Jan - 25 Mar 2014, 7pm - 9pm Everest Community Academy, Oxford Way, Basingstoke RG24 9UP AUTHENTIC INDIAN COOKERY COURSE

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15 Jan 2014, 7:45pm The Anvil LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The evening's programme includes Mendelssohn: Overture: The Hebrides and Symphony no. 3 (Scottish). Both Mendelssohn pieces stem from a trip the young composer made to the Highlands in 1829, although the symphony was in fact the last he composed. It passes through a wide range of moods, from dramatic struggle to the Scottish dance finale which ends with a jubilant coda.
01256 844244 www.anvilarts.org.uk

17 Jan 2014, 7:30pm Central Studio Queen Mary's College ACOUSTIC OPEN MIC NIGHT

FREE - Come along to play or just come to hear some of the most talented musicians in Basingstoke. Everybody welcome, from professionals to first time performers. Bar available.
Free parking available.
www.centralstudio.co.uk

17 Jan 2014, 7:45pm The Anvil JOHANN STRAUSS GALA A VIENNESE PARTY

Starring irrepressible showman and conductor Rainer Hersch, who takes you on a light-hearted journey through a fizzing assortment of music and dance. Dancers twirl and whirl in graceful unison with billowing gowns and distinctive elegance.
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• Perpetuum Mobile
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20 Jan 2014, 2pm - 4pm KINGSCLERE VILLAGE HALL DRAWING AND PAINTING CLASSES

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24 Jan 2014, 7:45pm The Anvil LET'S HANG ON

A musical journey through the prolific career of one of the most successful bands of all time - Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons. From their beginnings in the early 50s, the show takes you through hits such as 'Beggin'', 'Greatest Love of All', 'Sherry', 'Rag Doll', 'Take My Eyes Off You', 'December 1963 (Oh What a Night)', 'Working My Way Back To You', 'Walk Like A Man', 'Big Girls Don't Cry', and many more, climaxing with a spectacular finale featuring, of course, Let's Hang On! This recently revised production features brand new sound, lighting and AV screens. Definitely not a night to be missed!
TICKETS: £21
01256 844244 www.anvilarts.org.uk

25 Jan 2014, 11am
Central Studio Queen Mary's College
THE SNOW QUEEN
£6 full, £5 children. With beautifully crafted songs, this Anderson tale will delight and enthrall all who watch. From the Sorcerer who creates the mirror that distorts people's stare, to the path of true love that Gerda shows Kay. This is an adventure story that follows Gerda on her search to find Kay who has been kidnapped by the Snow Queen.
www.centralstudio.co.uk

21 Jan 2014 Phoenix Theatre Bordon OMID DJALILI LIVE 01420 472664

25 Jan 2014, 11am Central Studio Queen Mary's College THE GOLDEN PRINCESS

£6 full, £5 children. Melo, the strange, one legged musician, sits alone by the sea, content in his world and playing the most beautiful music. But who comes here? A golden carriage bearing a Princess so beautiful that she wears a golden mask to hide her blinding beauty.

And she pushes him in the mud! What kind of a world is this, where one who hides her beauty behaves so badly to the one with beauty at his fingertips? It is the 'Land of Rumours' of course. A theatrical performance using acting, puppets, shadows and music.
www.centralstudio.co.uk

25 Jan 2014, 7:45pm The Anvil PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

The programme begins with Brahms' Piano Concerto no 2. After a first movement which is symphonic in scope, Brahms adds a scherzo to the usual three movement concerto form. The beautiful slow movement, featuring a prominent cello solo part, gives way to a graceful, Hungarian-flavoured finale.
01256 844244
www.anvilarts.org.uk

25 Jan 2014, 7:30pm
The Haymarket
THE KAST OFF KINKS
The Kinks is often cited as one of the most important and influential rock bands of all time. Their first hit, You Really Got Me, in 1964, broke new ground with driving power chords and Dave Davies' distorted guitar sounds, and created a template for many bands to follow in a rock and roll development which led variously to heavy metal, new wave and grunge.
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Puzzles

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Sudoku

Place a number from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so that each 3x3 block, column, and full row includes each of the numbers from 1 to 9 only once. **EASY/MEDIUM/HARD**

4					8	2		5
	3		2	1		4		
	7	6	3					9
				9	6	1	5	4
		8				7		
9	1	4	5	3				
3					5	9	6	
		7		6	2		8	
1		9	7					2

6	4							7
				6	5		8	
9	1				7			3
	2				4			
	9	7				2	1	
			7				3	
2			4				6	1
	5		6	7				
7							5	2

			2		8			1
4		5				7		
	1	3						
	6			9				
7			3		1			8
				6			9	
						5	6	
		8				3		4
1			9		5			

Two speed crossword

Quick Clues Across

- 1 Offshoots (8)
- 4 Rowing team (4)
- 8 Dirty (6)
- 10 Musical instruments (6)
- 11 Award (5)
- 12 An animal (5)
- 14 Express regret (6)
- 17 Schemers (9)
- 18 Small fishes (9)
- 22 Pamper (6)
- 23 Cancer (5)
- 24 Transactions (5)
- 26 Was afraid (6)
- 27 Proper (6)
- 28 Mislaid (4)
- 29 Was of importance (8)

Quick Clues Down

- 1 Sculpture (4)
- 2 In a foreign country (6)
- 3 Peals (6)
- 5 Depends (6)
- 6 Laundry basins (8)
- 7 Confusion (5)
- 9 Pleased (9)
- 10 Festivities (9)
- 13 Intends (5)
- 15 Arrange, as feathers (5)
- 16 Imaginative (8)
- 18 Inhabitants of a continent (6)
- 19 Yields (5)
- 20 Bug (6)
- 21 A season (6)
- 25 Stained (4)

Cryptic Clues Across

- 1 Beaten, but hurried round the snare (8)
- 4 The ones, for example, given to punters (4)
- 8 Rules to resign from? (6)
- 10 Emphatic type (6)
- 11 Find him in the ice without one sound (5)
- 12 That is after the general spirit (5)
- 14 Capital fever follows the pair (6)
- 17 Flirtation for every one in the dance (9)
- 18 Everything I've turned on and consumed will make it easier to bear (9)
- 22 Sounds like intelligence or one who exercises judgment (6)
- 23 But the occasion for the first woman was the Old Testament (5)
- 24 Never the writer to make a world tour (5)
- 26 Act employed getting soaked (6)
- 27 Emotional shock due to rum at a rumus (6)
- 28 The rush that can make men's fortunes (4)
- 29 Peerless ones at rest (8)

Cryptic Clues Down

- 1 Look right in it's full of life (4)
- 2 Elevated when extolled without a head (6)
- 3 Write a hundred and forty-nine with it (6)
- 5 The flood that traditionally comes after me in France (6)
- 6 In this way the range of knowledge of the editor dwindled (8)
- 7 Hard back (5)
- 9 Protected what she nearly altered (9)
- 10 Restless because I'm sick (9)
- 13 Hammers home the finger guards (5)
- 15 Shrewd angle (5)
- 16 Guardian to look at the animal? (8)
- 18 Book for the garden? (6)
- 19 Look at the minister coming back as a suitor (5)
- 20 Opposed to a piece of poetry (6)
- 21 Provide with the right to last (6)
- 25 The crowd at the service (4)

1		2		3					4	5		6
							7					
8					9			10				
				11								
	12		13					14		15		
16		17										
			18		19				20		21	
22								23				
				24								25
26								27				
28						29						

Scribble space

Last week's solutions

7	2	8	6	3	4	1	9	5
9	3	1	8	5	2	7	6	4
6	5	4	7	9	1	3	2	8
2	7	6	3	8	5	9	4	1
8	4	9	1	2	6	5	3	7
5	1	3	9	4	7	6	8	2
3	6	7	2	1	8	4	5	9
4	9	2	5	7	3	8	1	6
1	8	5	4	6	9	2	7	3

5	4	2	1	9	6	3	7	8
6	3	7	5	8	4	1	2	9
8	9	1	2	3	7	6	4	5
9	8	4	7	5	3	2	1	6
1	6	3	9	4	2	8	5	7
2	7	5	8	6	1	9	3	4
7	1	8	4	2	9	5	6	3
3	2	9	6	7	5	4	8	1
4	5	6	3	1	8	7	9	2

2	1	7	6	4	9	5	3	8
5	4	6	3	1	8	7	2	9
8	9	3	2	5	7	1	6	4
7	3	8	1	6	4	2	9	5
4	2	9	7	8	5	3	1	6
1	6	5	9	3	2	4	8	7
6	7	1	5	9	3	8	4	2
9	5	4	8	2	1	6	7	3
3	8	2	4	7	6	9	5	1

Quick Crossword

Across: 4 Shrimp 8 Temples 9 Locate 10 Ferry boat
11 Mess 13 Stops 14 Riposte 16 Overeat 18 Cargo
19 Felt 21 Essential 22 Endive 23 Started 24 Siding
Down: 1 Deceptive 2 Spare part 3 Herbs 5 Hoot
6 Images 7 Please 9 Latin 11 Monastery 12 Stagnated
15 Raise 16 Offers 17 Eluded 20 Rests 21 Even

Cryptic Crossword

Across: 4 Switch 8 Related 9 Cruise 10 Isolation 11 Here
13 Stabs 14 Bemused 16 Average 18 Oboes 19 Lead
21 Encounter 22 Outfit 23 Detract 24 Thymes
Down: 1 Sensitive 2 Early bird 3 Depth 5 Warn 6 Tribes
7 Heeled 9 Cores 11 Husbandry 12 Reverence 15 Agent
16 Almost 17 Earthy 20 Dover 21 Eire



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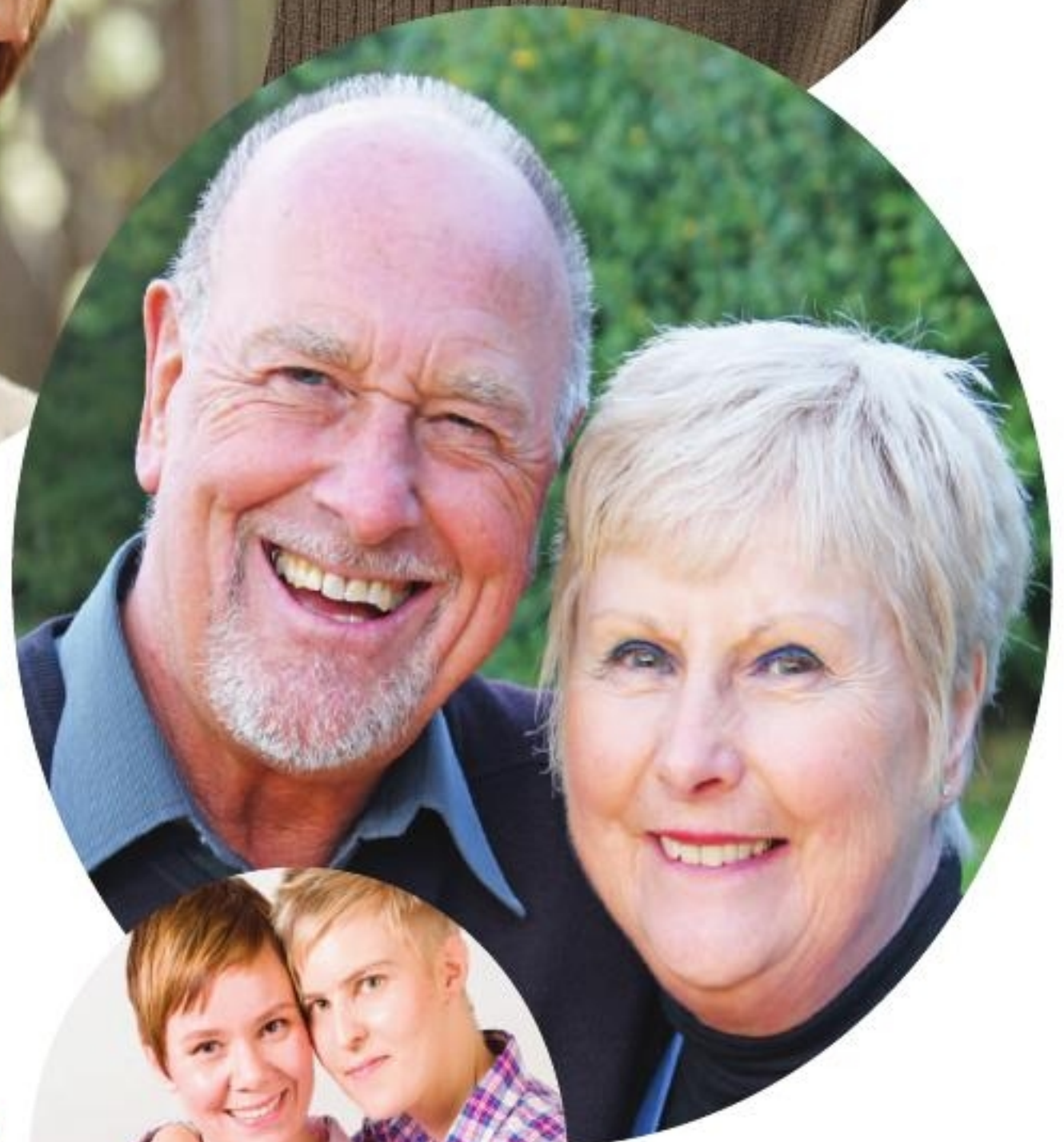
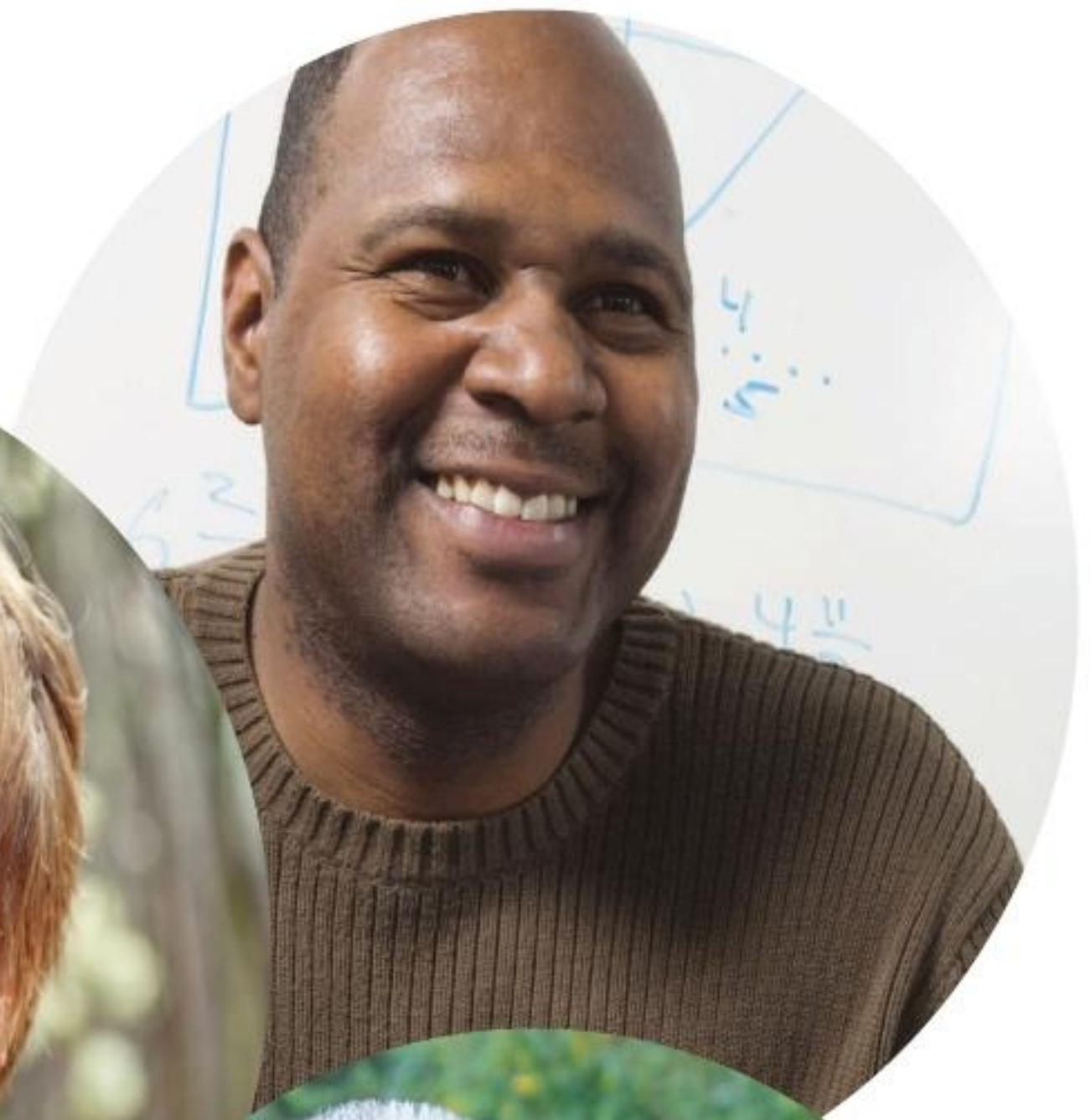
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¹We have included a reasonable budget for your flights. Should the cost of these flights be above this amount we will amend the holiday cost to reflect these changes and therefore the price may increase or decrease accordingly. The final price will be confirmed at the time of booking. The advertised prices are correct as of 27/12/13 and are based upon departure from Heathrow airport on 8/10/14.

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PRICE INCLUDES:

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- 4 nights stay at the Best Western Royal Plaza hotel, Marlborough with breakfast
- 2 nights stay at the Holiday Inn Rutland, Vermont with breakfast

¹We have included a reasonable budget for your flights. Should the cost of these flights be above this amount we will amend the holiday cost to reflect these changes and therefore the price may increase or decrease accordingly. The final price will be confirmed at the time of booking. The advertised prices are correct as of 27/12/13 and are based upon departure from Heathrow airport on 25/9/14.

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New Year, New You

Advertising Feature

The future of fitness

IF YOU'RE determined to get active in 2014, but want something a little more exciting than the treadmill, look no further as we round up the new crazes and classes heading to a gym near you soon.

Predicting a fitness trend can be an unpredictable business.

What about 2013 when, after seven decades of waiting, we finally had our male Wimbledon Singles champion. Did we all dust down our tennis rackets? Or did we, instead, traipse to dance studios and seek fitness guidance from a Miley Cyrus-inspired 'Twerk-out'?

What might seem like a maze of contradictions to us, though, comes as little surprise to fitness experts. At the end of every year, industry insiders use their knowledge and experience to judge what will be capturing the public's active imagination in the coming 12 months, and what we all be enjoying - or enduring - at gyms, parks and dance studios across the country when the New Year resolutions finally kick in. Here's a look at some new trends for 2014.

• Small group training

The normal, '30-odd people jammed in a studio' format of most gym classes can feel impersonal to your needs, difficult to book, and daunting if you're not a regular. But next year there'll be

By Nel Staveley

a move towards 'small group personal training', where personal trainers lead groups of only three to five clients. Combating the 'one size fits all' approach, small group personal training gives a more tailored programme for your body and fitness levels than the larger classes, but you still get the competitive motivation from working out with others, which gives it an edge over one-to-one personal training.

"People still want that personal service, but with the ability to share their experiences too," explains Lee Matthews from Fitness First gyms (www.fitness-first.co.uk).

Key health benefits include improved flexibility, strength and endurance, and cardiovascular fitness and stress reduction.

• High intensity interval training

In our time-poor modern world, lengthy workouts are falling out of favour. Very few of us have the spare hours, or the inclination, for endless trudging on the treadmill; we want to fit an effective workout in our lunch-break instead. Cue the unstoppable rise of 'high intensity interval training' (HIIT) - several short intense bursts of exercise, followed by periods of

rest, contained in workouts of 10-30 minutes maximum.

"It is far more effective at burning calories both from carbohydrates and fat than low intensity, steady state exercise," says Williams.

"Not only does it burn high amounts of calories in one short session, it also has a significant post workout calorie burn (or EPOC, Excess Post Oxygen Consumption) so you get double 'bang for your buck'."

This interval training has been on the radar of dedicated fitness followers for years, but it is now making its step over to the mainstream, with most personal trainers advocating it to their clients, and some gyms will now offer specific classes.

For example, Virgin Active health clubs offer their new '24 MAXercise' class - 24 high intensity exercises in 24 minutes.

While HIIT has its benefits, experts do advise that it should be approached sensibly, and not every workout session should be HIIT - Williams advises aiming for two to four sessions per week if you train regularly, and building up slowly if your body's new to it.

• Playground style fun

Most of 2014's fitness trends have a theme of simplicity and 'back to basics', and never is that clearer than in the emphasis on

good, old-fashioned fun.

From tribal dance classes to specifically-designed 'fitness playgrounds', 2014 looks set to be the year we start smiling, instead of grimacing, when we exercise.

The addictively enjoyable TRX Suspension Training is set to take the fitness world by storm next year - bright straps you attach to a high point, then use as a support to balance, lean and pull, using both gravity and your own body

weight to build resistance.

The ultimate smile-raiser - dancing - is back with a vengeance too. Billed as 'the next Zumba', the phenomenally successful Latin American dance craze of 2012, comes Fierce, a South African tribal dance class, where participants are encouraged to "let loose as they tap into their warrior energy".

If that sounds a little too embarrassing, FitSteps (fan.fitsteps.co.uk) is a new 'fusion' dance class

blending Latin and Ballroom dances, and claims to burn up to 600 calories in one 45-minute class. Launched by Strictly Come Dancing stars Natalie Lower and Ian Waite, and former contestant - and world champion swimmer - Mark Foster, FitSteps wholly believes in the power of dance to make you feel good - "and because you're having so much fun," says Lowe simply, "you don't even realise that you're working every part of the body."



• Small group training at Fitness First. Picture credit: PA Photo/Professional Images.

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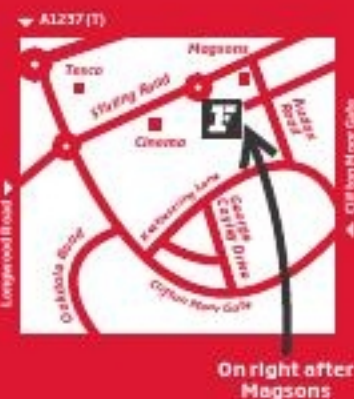
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The return of a classic

SINCE it was first launched in 1998, the Ford Focus has become a familiar sight on our roads, blending enough style, practicality and drivability, to ensure it has enjoyed class-leading popularity.

This new third-generation model is the first Focus to be built under the new 'One Ford' plan, making it the first global Focus.

However, engine and trim levels are market specific, and the main UK variants include: Edge, Zetec, Zetec S, Titanium Navigator and Titanium Navigator X, with the petrol engine lineup ranging from the 99 bhp and 123 bhp 1.0 litre Ecoboost, to the 148 bhp and 178 bhp 1.6 Ecoboost units. There are 1.6 and 2.0 diesels, too.

With 148 bhp on tap, this 1.6 Ecoboost engine is capable of decent performance, although it perhaps lacks the flexibility of a similarly powered diesel; requiring the driver to use ample revs

REVIEW: FORD FOCUS

By **Philip Shoulder**

@writeonmotoring

to wring out the motor's available power.

On the other hand, when driven more gently, this engine is capable of returning pretty decent fuel consumption and emission figures (47.9mpg and 137g/km of CO2) while also being an effective cruiser.

Of course, previous Focus models were known for being great to drive and this new car is no exception, with sweet, agile handling, good body-control and grip levels, together with well-weighted and precise steering. Strong, progressive brakes and an accurate gear change complete the driver rewarding package.

The Focus's cabin isn't quite as commodious as a VW Golf's, but there's still ample leg and headroom for four occupants.

Slightly disappointing is the 316 litre boot – considerably off class best – although unusually for a hatchback, the rear seats do fold completely flat.

Admittedly, rear three-quarter vision is rather restricted (par-for-the-course in most modern hatchbacks), but the driving position is first-class, due to spot-on alignment of seat, steering wheel and pedals, with generous amounts of adjustment available.

Air-conditioning is standard across the range, while Zetec trim provides DAB radio and Ford Navigation, Bluetooth and a heated windscreen.

Verdict:

The latest Focus builds on the strengths of its predecessors, while now offering considerably better safety and refinement; along with a higher overall quality of fit and finish. This 148bhp 1.6 Ecoboost model blends warm-hatch levels of performance with reasonable running costs.



• The new Ford Focus



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The official fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km) for the: 107 range: Urban 52.3 – 55.4 (5.4 – 5.1), Extra Urban 70.7 – 74.3 (4.0 – 3.8), Combined 62.8 – 65.7 (4.5 – 4.3) and CO2 104 – 99. 207 range: Urban 30.1 – 54.3 (9.4 – 5.2), Extra Urban 54.3 – 80.7 (5.2 – 3.5), Combined 42.2 – 67.3 (6.7 – 4.2) and CO2 155 – 110. 208 range: Urban 34.9 – 78.4 (8.1 – 3.6), Extra Urban 62.8 – 88.2 (4.5 – 3.2), Combined 48.7 – 83.0 (5.8 – 3.4) and CO2 135 – 87.

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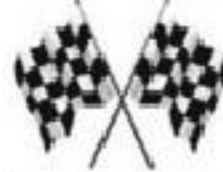
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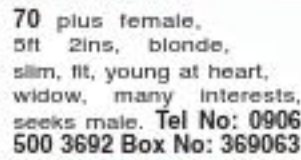
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Croker's men secure vital away points

BASINGSTOKE RFC won their first game since November on Saturday, as they defeated relegation-threatened Thurrock 33-23 away from home.

The visitors took the lead through a Ryan Davis try, which was quickly converted by Adam Davies at the six-minute mark.

Thurrock then scored a try of their own from winger Jake Barand, and even though Frankie Neale missed the conversion the hosts were soon ahead as Earl Gorman added another unconverted try.

Davies then kicked a penalty to level the scores, but Thurrock again pulled clear as James Flavin scored the home team's third try, which this time was successfully converted by Neale.

'Stoke then burst into action as first Davies added another penalty, then Jobi Kochanowski went over and Davies converted for a 20-17 lead at the break.

A third penalty from Davies followed after the break, along with a penalty for Thurrock courtesy of Neale.

Davies then scored and converted a try of his own, and a fourth penalty gave a final score of 33-20.

'Stoke are now 10th in the National League Three London table with 31 points, and are back in action on Saturday when they host Bury St. Edmunds.

Find us on Twitter
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Back-to-back defeats for Sheppard's Bison

By Adam Flinn

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

TWO defeats in two days culminated in a miserable weekend for Basingstoke Bison, who have now gone three games without a win for the first time this season.

A 4-2 defeat at home to Telford Tigers was followed by a 5-2 loss away to Manchester Phoenix, which sees Bison drop to third in the English Ice Hockey Premier League.

Saturday's match with Telford saw no scoring in the first period, although Bison player-coach Doug Sheppard's effort at 9:27 was disallowed after a quick whistle from referee Dave Cloutman.

The Tigers got the only goal in the second period through Nathan Salem, and Mikka Kiviranta added a second shortly after the break.

Nicky Chinn was able to pull one back for the Herd just 12 seconds later, but Kiviranta struck again to restore the Tigers' two-goal advantage.

Andy Melachrinou got Bison's second and the hosts pulled net-minder Dean Skinns forward to try for a late equaliser, but it was unsuccessful and the Tigers' Scott McKenzie grabbed an empty net goal for a final 4-2 result.

Sunday's game against Manchester Phoenix got off to a



• Doug Sheppard

promising start for Bison, as Melachrinou scored soon after the 10-minute mark.

However Phoenix were quickly ahead, as Ben Wood scored first at 11:24 before Frantisek Bakrlik added another at 11:55.

Luke Boothroyd got two more for Phoenix in the second period, firstly netting James Archer and Tony Hand's assist at 22:55

before adding a powerplay goal nine minutes later.

Skinns picked up a leg injury which brought the second period to an early end, but the netminder was able to continue and Tomas Karpov pulled one back for the Bison when play resumed.

Archer was able to grab a fifth for Phoenix at 57:25, for a final

scoreline of 5-2.

Having gone into the weekend top of the league, Bison have dropped to third with 50 points, but remain only one point behind leaders Guildford Flames and tied with Phoenix in second.

Bison only have one match next weekend, as they face Peterborough Phantoms at home on Saturday.

Sport Bites

Ryan's the man

YOUNG tennis ace Ryan Goleworthy has cemented his position on the Lawn Tennis Association's FutureStars programme.

The 12-year-old Odiham schoolboy is among the UK's top 20 in his age group.

It is the third year running he has featured in the programme.

His year's highlights include winning the West Worthing Grade Three tournament, and he has set his sights on competing in European tennis.

Brendan's pride

BASINGSTOKE and Mid Hants runner Brendan O'Connor is celebrating after being selected to run for Ireland.

The runner finished third in the Ireland under-19 Cross Country Championships in Waterford in December.

Martial arts joy

BASINGSTOKE'S Shin Gi Tai Martial Arts Academy bagged 17 medals from the recent Kyoji Kai tournament in London.

The event is one of many ranking competitions in the country that competitors look to impress, in order to be selected as part of the national squad.

The academy's team returned to north Hampshire with five gold medals, three silver and nine bronze.

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Hartley falter against strugglers, but Whitchurch back to winning ways

HARTLEY Wintney were held at struggling Horley Town last Saturday.

In their first domestic fixture of the calendar year, Ben Dillon's side travelled to the Surrey outfit looking to take all three points. And it looked that way for

a while, when frontman Sam Argent put the visitors ahead in the first half.

However, Harry Williams equalised as the home side held out for a battling draw, despite playing the last few minutes with 10 men.

Hartley's match against Hanworth Villa was called off on Tuesday night due to a waterlogged pitch.

Elsewhere, Jim Macey's Whitchurch United picked up their first win since mid-December with a 3-0 victory over

Downton.

A Shane Lock brace and a Luke Walker strike was enough to see off the Jam Boys' opponents.

Macey's side are sixth in the Wessex Premier, and travel to Brockenhurst on Saturday.

Danny Dolan's Tadley Calvea

have suffered more than most with the recent weather.

Tadley have not played since their 2-0 away success at Ringwood Town on December 28.

They are ninth in Wessex Division One, and travel to Pewsey Vale on Saturday.

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Inside: Back-to-back defeats for Sheppard's Bison | Croker's men secure vital away points | Ryan's the man

TOWN DEFEATED BY LOWLY WHITEHAWK

'Very poor' performance on home soil leaves manager Bristow disappointed

A DISAPPOINTED Jason Bristow lamented his side's display as they lost 3-1 at home to struggling Whitehawk on Tuesday night.

Kezie Ibe's effort just after half an hour cancelled out Danny Mills's tap-in 10 minutes earlier.

However, Town could not press on after fighting their way back into the game, and found themselves 2-1 down 20 minutes into the second half.

Tommy Fraser curled a sumptuous free-kick into the top corner from 25 yards after Robbie Rice's foul.

Bristow's team threw men forward in search of an equaliser, but their efforts proved to be futile.

And, almost inevitably, Whitehawk broke away just minutes from the end, with Basingstoke's back line exposed.

Substitute Alex Addai ran clean through and slotted home comfortably past a despairing Louis Wells between the Basingstoke sticks.

Bristow had no complaints with the outcome of the match.

By James Booker

news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

"We were disappointing," he said. "We played very poorly compared to our standards and didn't adjust to the conditions very well."

"And we didn't keep the ball well enough at all, so by our standards it was a very below par performance."

"I think last night was one of the games where we weren't good enough all over the pitch and didn't keep the ball well enough, and it's frustrating."

"We didn't play the conditions well enough and we were beaten by a team that looked hungry on the night."

Bristow also insisted his players will be itching to set the record straight after Tuesday night's display.

"We've got a good training session on Thursday planned, and players will be chomping at the bit I'm sure to rectify Tuesday's performance."

"Hopefully the talking will be done on the pitch [on Saturday]."

One small positive from Tuesday is that the Dragons do not

have any new injury worries ahead of Saturday's trip to Eastbourne Borough.

Town then face Whitechurch United in the quarter finals of

the Hampshire Senior Cup next Tuesday.

Bristow's men are now 12th in the division, with Tuesday's win taking their opponents out of the

relegation zone.

The Dragons had shared the spoils at the Camrose on Saturday after a 0-0 draw with Bath City.



• Basingstoke lost against Whitehawk on Tuesday (Picture by Les Chase)

**Basingstoke Town 1
Whitehawk 3**

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